



IOWA RECOVERY TIMES

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Iowa Receives Largest Grant in Nation For Having Best Flood Mitigation Efforts

Earlier this month, Gov. Culver and state officials joined U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials to announce that the State of Iowa has been awarded \$84.1 million to reduce the human, physical, and economic toll of future disasters. The grants are provided through HUD's Disaster Recovery Enhancement Fund (DREF), a total of \$312 million in funding that is intended to encourage states to undertake activities and long-term strategies that focus on reducing damages from future natural disasters.

The DREF was established to support state's long-term recovery efforts. In the past two years, HUD allocated more than \$5.6 billion in

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) disaster recovery funding to 13 states, including more than \$642 million to the State of Iowa. These 13 states were eligible to receive additional allocations based on the significant investment they've made by targeting their CDBG funds to disaster mitigation. Iowa was awarded the largest grant because the state did the best of any other state by already spending almost half of the \$642 million toward flood mitigation.

"We're making a serious investment in our future by making certain that when disaster strikes, the impacted communities in these states can weather the storm," said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan.

DREF funds can be used toward many projects, including:

- Buyout payments for homeowners living in high-risk areas;
- Optional relocation payments to encourage residents to move to safer locations;
- Home improvement grants to reduce damage risks (property elevation, etc.);
- Improving and enforcing building codes;
- Developing forward-thinking land-use plans that reduce development in high-risk areas.

Gov. Culver Announces Additional Disaster Recovery Dollars to Disaster-Impacted Businesses

Earlier this month, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) notified the state that private loans will no longer be considered a duplication of benefits for disaster impacted businesses receiving federal funds.

State officials have been working with HUD for several months to obtain clarification on this issue as it was affecting the amount of dollars that businesses could receive through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. As a result of this notification the Iowa

Department of Economic Development (IDED) will be able to provide more dollars to affected businesses. Prior to this clarification, private bank loans had to be considered as duplicating the disaster funds and subtracted from the total amount available to an eligible business.

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Iowa Smart Planning Task Force Seeks Input From Iowans

The Iowa Smart Planning Task Force will hold public input meetings in late September and early October to solicit public input on draft recommendations to support Smart Planning in Iowa.

The meetings, which will be hosted in five communities and online, will give Iowans the opportunity to review the draft recommendations and offer their opinions for inclusion in the final recommendations submitted to the Governor and Legislature.

Each of the meetings will run 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Each session will include a description of the responsibilities and activities of the Task Force, as well as an introduction to the draft recommendations. Following each presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in small-group discussions, and will be encouraged to ask questions and provide ideas for changing or adding to the recommendations. Attendees are welcome to come

and go as their schedules permit. Brief presentations will be offered at 4:30 and again at 5:30 to provide the same introduction to all participants.

Additionally, a survey will be provided at the meetings and on the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force Web site to gauge support for particular recommendations, and to collect additional public comments.

One webinar meeting will be available online and by phone. To register for the webinar, visit <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/368472883>. The web-based session will include a presentation similar to the on-location sessions, followed by an opportunity for participants to ask questions and provide comments.

To download the draft recommendations and a public input survey, and to get more information about the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force, please visit http://www.rio.iowa.gov/smart_planning/index.html.



Iowa Smart Planning Task Force Public Input Meetings Schedule:

- **Sept. 28:** Spencer City Hall, 418 Second Ave. West, Spencer
- **Sept. 29:** Montgomery County History Center, 2700 North 4th Street, Red Oak
- **Sept. 30:** Waverly Civic Center, 200 First St. N.E., Waverly
- **Oct. 5:** Meeting room A, Coralville Public Library 1401 Fifth St., Coralville
- **Oct. 6:** Webinar, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- **Oct. 7:** Boone City Hall Auditorium, 923 Eighth St., Boone

Alaska Officials Draw from Iowa's 2008 Disaster Recovery Experiences

Earlier this month, Alaska emergency management officials brought Emily Shields, the Rebuild Iowa Office's (RIO) chief of staff, to Anchorage to discuss the creation and role of the RIO, as well as best practices and lessons learned during recovery from 2008 floods and tornadoes.

In addition, Alaska's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management asked Shields to assist them with a recovery exercise which focuses on housing issues in the recovery phase of a disaster, using a catastrophic earthquake scenario. Expertise from RIO was sought due to the office's experience in synchronizing recovery from Iowa's disastrous

2008 floods and tornadoes, said Kathy Cavyell, lead exercise planner with Alaska's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

"My presentation focused on how much we've learned from the 2008 recovery, and the importance of long-term recovery planning," Shields said. "I also talked about the structure of our office and the programs we've helped develop. Iowa's leaders and officials have had to be innovative to make federal programs work for long-term recovery, and to create new programs to assist individuals, families, businesses and communities recover from the worst natural disaster to hit Iowa."

Due to its 2008 recovery efforts, Iowa is being identified as a national leader in disaster recovery and a model for other states to emulate following their own major disasters. A few ways the state has been leading the way include hosting one of the nation's first recovery exercises this summer at the State Emergency Operations Center, and drafting a state long-term disaster recovery framework to be submitted to Governor Chet Culver and Iowa legislators by the end of this year.

Shields emphasized the importance of sharing lessons learned and expertise in long-term recovery with other states.

"We are interested in moving the whole country forward in regard to long-term disaster recovery planning," she said.